

developed for about ten different species and four Gene Banks have been established for conservation of the important medicinal plants. Protocols for tissue culture have been developed for medicinal and aromatic plants like *Reuvsolia serpentina*, *Chlorophytum* and *Commiphora mukul* and for bamboo. Large quantity of bamboo plants produced by the Tissue Culture Pilot Plants at Tata Energy Research Institute (TERI), New Delhi and National Chemical Laboratory (NCL), Pune have been planted at various locations of the country. For increasing the area under medicinal plants, the Department of Agriculture and Cooperation is extending support to the farmers under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme on Macro Management in Agriculture Supplementation/Complementation of States' Efforts through Work Plans.

Financial help by international bodies

2860. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to refer to the answer to Starred Question 38, Unstarred Questions 95 and 99 dated 22nd February, 2001 and state:

(a) whether the disaster viz. flood, earthquake, cyclone and drought on national scale in either part of India is a matter of day to day;

(b) whether Government have recently announced the composition of Permanent National Disaster Management Committee of Experts;

(c) if so, whether the Committee would hold its regular meetings regarding national disaster on State and Central level;

(d) how Government propose to equip the Committee with proper and constant funding; and

(e) whether Government would approach the international bodies to provide requisite financial help on permanent basis?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK): (a) to (d) Due to geographical features, the country is prone to various natural disasters. Almost every year one part or other of the country

[22 March, 2001]

RAJYA SABHA

experiences one or more natural disasters with varying magnitude, causing damage to infrastructure and private properties besides loss of human lives.

In the wake of the earthquake in Gujarat, a National Committee on Disaster Management has been set up under the Chairmanship of the Prime Minister having representatives of the national and State level political parties to, *inter-alia*, suggest the necessary institutional and legislative measures needed for an effective and long term strategy to deal with major natural calamities in the future. The 1st meeting of the Committee was held on 18th February, 2001 and it was decided to constitute a Working Group which in turn will set-up Task Forces for suggesting long term measures.

(e) The present policy of the Government of India for accepting foreign assistance is not to issue a formal appeal on behalf of the Government, either directly or through any other agency, to attract relief. However, relief donated on a voluntary basis is accepted and acknowledge as a sign of international solidarity. Arrangements have been tied up with the World Bank and Asian Development Bank for obtaining a line of credit of US\$ 800 million.

Department of Disaster Management

2861 SHRI RAJNATH SINGH 'SURYA': Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal for creating a separate Department of Disaster Management;

(b) if not, would such a proposal not be necessary for coordinating and acting immediately in the wake of any disaster such as floods, cyclones, earthquakes etc; and

(c) if yes, details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK): (a) and (c) The Department of Agriculture & Cooperation is the Nodal Department and Natural Disaster Management Division in the Department is the dedicated division for coordination of all Central